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The Nut Tree in the Middle West

C. Martin

Iowa State College

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The Nut Tree in the Middle West

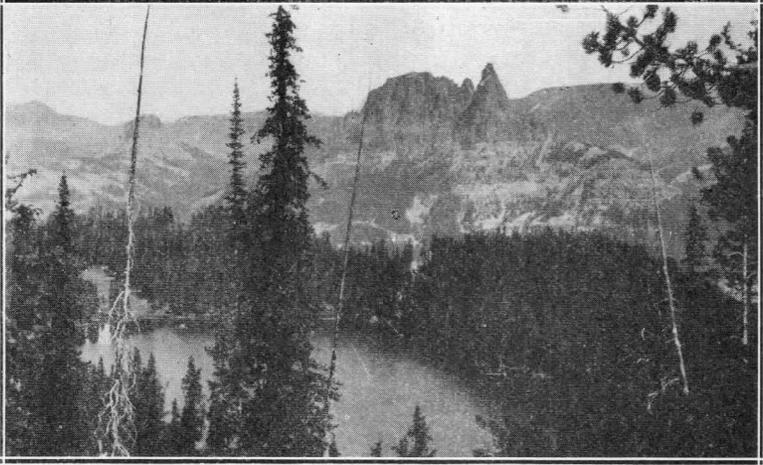
C. Martin.

The early pioneer of the Middlewest appreciated the value of the nut trees which grew abundantly along the river bottoms. In his tiny sod hut, riding at anchor in a sea of billowing prairie, he knew that the stored bushels of black walnuts and hickories would nourish him when the bitter lash of a prairie winter drove the wallowing herds of bison toward the southland. The years rolled by and the oncoming hosts of civilization fenced the prairie. The sod hut gave way to modern farm homes, and the nut trees were cut to furnish pasturage for steer and hog. At that time the fat hog and steer were considered the prime source of fat and protein, but today a tremendously increasing population brings us to realize that the day is not far hence when the nut tree will assert itself as a more efficient producer of fat than its animal competitor. But the farmer is not particularly concerned with the problems of future generations. He wishes to know the status of the nut tree today.

At present the place of the nut tree is for roadside and pasture planting. Every rural roadside in the Middlewest should be planted to improved varieties of black walnut and hickory trees. These magnificent trees have a stateliness of form and a nobility of bearing which dignify and enrich the landscape. Their esthetic value alone would justify extensive roadside planting; but when the historical and economic values are added they assert their importance so strongly that the up-to-date farmer is laying his plans for the planting of his roadside. The pasture land is also receiving consideration. Experimentation has shown that black walnut and hickory can be grown on pasture land without impairing the forage value of the land. Consequently two crops can be grown on the same area.

Undoubtedly a multitude of questions come to your mind. What varieties? How long before they bear? How much do they yield? And many others. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss these questions. They will be answered fully in a bulletin which the Forestry Department of Iowa State College will publish during the current year. The purpose of this brief article is to bring your attention to a potential source of income which is of sufficient importance to warrant careful investigation. The nut culture movement is gaining impetus daily and its influence is being felt throughout the entire Middlewest. The farm week pro-

grams are including nut trees in their list of subjects and soon the nut trees will achieve the importance in Midwestern agriculture which they so richly deserve.



Washaki National Forest, Wyoming.

